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## APPENDIX F

## MILITARY WORKING DOG (MWD) FIRST AID

1. Disease Prevention. The importance and nature of their demanding work places MWDs in a special class. Every effort must be made to keep the MWD in the best possible state of health. The veterinarian is able to apply his/her knowledge in an effort toward treatment, prevention and control of diseases, but requires the handler's help. It is the handlers' responsibilities to be familiar with their MWD's normal attitude. Any changes from the dog's normal attitude must be reported to the veterinarian immediately. It is not expected that handlers be capable of recognizing and diagnosing specific diseases; it is, however, important to recognize signs of illness and be able to intelligently report these signs to the veterinarian.

2. Pulse. The normal pulse rate is from 70 to 100 beats per minute depending upon the breed and size of the dog. The pulse may be felt on the left side of the dog just back of the elbow joint or on the femoral artery, which is located on the inner side of either hind leg. The pulse is counted for 30 seconds and the total is multiplied by two. Since exercise/excitement causes the pulse to quicken, the dog should be at rest when the pulse is taken. During illness, the pulse is faster than normal or varies considerably, becoming stronger or weaker than normal.

3. Temperature. Almost every serious ailment shows itself in the dog's body temperature. If the dog acts lifeless, looks dull-eyed, and gives the impression of illness, check its temperature. A rectal thermometer of either plastic or glass is best suited for this procedure. Although uncommon, there is always the hazard of possible breakage should the dog become excited during insertion. However, the dog is easily calmed if you sooth it when the routine is taking place. As a safety precaution, always muzzle the dog before taking its temperature. Hold the dog securely, and insert the thermometer, which has been lubricated with vaseline/mineral oil. Hold the thermometer in

place for 2 to 3 minutes. The thermometer must be securely held to prevent it from completely entering the dog's rectum. Remove the thermometer carefully and take a reading. The average normal body temperature for dogs will be between 101 - 102 degrees Fahrenheit. Excitement may raise the temperature slightly, but any rise of more than a few points is cause for alarm, and a veterinarian should be consulted.

4. Administering Medication. The handler may have to restrain the dog and administer medication. The procedures described below are for a right-handed person. A left-handed person can use the same procedures by reversing positions.

a. Capsules/Tablets. If the veterinarian prescribes medicine in the form of tablets/capsules, it should be given either with food or by placing the tablets/capsules in the dog's mouth to swallow. The recommended procedure is given below.

STEP 1. The handler places the fingers of the left hand over the muzzle, and inserts the left thumb under the lip and between the dog's upper and lower right canine teeth. Use caution in doing this and do not force the dog's lip against the teeth, for this causes undue pain which will cause an increase in the dog's resistance to treatment.

STEP 2. The handler places the left thumb against the roof of the dog's mouth which will cause the dog to open its mouth immediately.

STEP 3. The handler places the capsule/tablet in the dog's throat at the extreme rear of the tongue to prevent the dog from spitting it out.

STEP 4. The handler quickly removes the right hand and with the left hand, closes the dog's mouth and gently massages the dog's throat. The entire procedure must be done as quickly and smoothly as possible, for a fumbling or delayed approach increases the dog's apprehension and resentment.

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b. Liquid Medication. The administration of liquid medicine is best done with the assistance of another person. With the left hand, the handler holds the upper and lower jaws together. With the right hand, the assistant pulls the dog's lips away from the teeth. When this is done, the dog's nose is pointed upward forming a natural funnel by the lip. The assistant pours the liquid into the funnel. Use caution in giving liquid medicine by mouth. Elevate the head only to an angle just above the horizon. If the head is raised any higher, the dog has difficulty swallowing. Give the liquid slowly, thereby giving the dog adequate time for swallowing. If given too rapidly, the liquid may get into the dog's trachea, nose, or lungs, thus causing possible damage. Use particular caution in giving oily liquids. If any signs of distress appear such as coughing or struggling, allow the dog to lower his head and rest before proceeding any further. Do not give medication by mouth if the dog is unconscious or cannot swallow.

5. First-Aid for MWDs. In general, a dog will heal its wounds by licking them. If it swallows anything harmful, chances are that it will throw it up. Treat the dog's wounds as you would your own. Wash out the dirt and apply an antiseptic. If you fear that the dog has swallowed poison, get the dog to the veterinarian's immediately. In the meantime, try to locate the source of poisoning. If the dog has swallowed, for example, a cleaning fluid kept in the kennel, check the label to see if inducing the dog to vomit will be harmful (depending on the type of poison swallowed). It is extremely important to report signs of injury/disease to the veterinarian as soon as possible so that proper treatment may be administered. There are times, however, when the dog's condition is of such an emergent nature that the handler may have to administer first-aid before the arrival of a veterinarian. In all emergency situations, the veterinarian should be notified as soon as possible.

a. Restraint. When a dog has been injured, or is suffering from any condition which requires emergency action on the handler's part, the dog experiences a situation in which there is pain/distress. The dog may respond to the handler's actions in a

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unpredictable manner, i.e., struggling violently, attempting to bite, etc. These are natural and normal reactions for a dog under such circumstances, but these reactions may result in further injury to the dog, to the handler, or to anyone assisting. It is important that the handler properly control and restrain the dog before attempting to administer first aid in any emergency situation. The handler should confidently approach the distressed dog by speaking in a soothing/calm voice lowering the dog's fear or apprehension. Whether or not to apply a muzzle depends on the nature of the emergency situation. If the animal is unconscious, a muzzle must not be applied. If there is difficulty in breathing or if there are severe wounds about the head, it is not wise to use a muzzle. In most cases, however, a muzzle should be used to protect the handler and anyone helping. There are several types of muzzles which may be used; the plastic basket muzzle is the best. This is the safest muzzle and permits free breathing.

(1) The plastic basket muzzle should be used whenever possible in an emergency situation remembering that the dog can still inflict injury; therefore, caution should be exercised.

(2) Another type of muzzle which can be used is the field muzzle. To apply the muzzle tighten the choke chain on the dog's neck by pulling the leash tightly with the right hand. Place the left hand, palm up, under the choke chain on the dog's neck and grasp the leash tightly as it passes through the palm of the left hand. Continue to wrap the leash once around the dog's neck and bring it up and across the left side of the dog's head. Finally, wrap the leash twice around the dogs muzzle and grasp it with the left hand. This muzzle may be used when the plastic/leather basket muzzle is not available or when it is believed that the basket muzzle would not provide adequate safety. Do not use the leash muzzle when the dog is overheated, having difficulty breathing, or when there is an indication that it may vomit. Do not leave it on for long periods of time in hot weather.

b. Wounds. Accidents, unfortunately, will happen so it is best to be prepared. If the dog's foot/leg has been cut badly,

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bandage the wound as tightly as possible to stop the bleeding. A wad of cotton may serve as a pressure bandage, which will ordinarily stop the flow of blood. Gauze wrapped around the cotton will hold it in place. Usually, applying such pressure to a wound will sufficiently stop the blood flow; however, for severe bleeding, such as when an artery is cut, a tourniquet may be necessary. Apply a tourniquet between the injury and the heart, if the bleeding is severe. Tourniquets can be improvised from a number of articles such as a belt, leash, necktie, bootlace or a piece of gauze bandaging material. The tourniquet will interfere with the blood supply of the leg; therefore, the tourniquet must be loosened every 5 to 8 minutes to keep tissue alive. Apply the tourniquet 3 or 4 inches above the wound with just enough pressure to control the bleeding. After placing a pressure bandage securely in place, remove the tourniquet. Do not apply a bandage over a tourniquet as the tourniquet may be forgotten and cause tissue damage. Take the dog to a veterinarian immediately since a tourniquet should not be left in place any longer than 15 minutes. Blood coming from an artery is bright red in color and will spurt in unison with the heart beat. From a vein, it is dark red and continuous in flow.

c. Fractures. Most fractures occur in one or more of the dog's limbs; therefore, immediately restrain the dog to prevent further injury. Keep the dog warm and quiet as some degree of shock usually accompanies a serious fracture. Whenever possible, do not move the dog until the veterinarian arrives. If this is not practical apply a splint to the leg before moving the dog. Fractures of the legs which are close to the body cannot be splinted. Splinting consists of fastening the leg to a firm object such as a stick/board by means of gauze bandage, strips of cloth, the leash, or similar material. The leg must be fastened both above and below the point of fracture immobilizing the leg. Apply the splint firmly but not so tightly that blood circulation in the leg is impaired. If the ends of the broken bone are protruding through the skin, cover the area with a clean, preferably sterile, gauze bandage before applying the splint. If the fracture cannot be splinted, transport the dog on a firm litter. The litter can be made from strips of board fastened

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together or from a sheet of plywood. It should be large enough to permit the dog to recline comfortably. Do not attempt to set the fracture as this causes the dog to suffer needlessly and might result in greater damage to the fracture. This is a job that must be done by a veterinarian.

d. Injuries of the Internal Organs. Internal injuries may be accompanied by internal bleeding and shock. Paleness of the membranes of the dog's mouth and eyes, rapid shallow breathing or a glassy look in the eyes may be apparent. Body temperature begins to drop and the lips and feet feel cold. If it's suspected that the dog may be suffering from internal injuries, keep it as warm and quiet as possible. Call for veterinary assistance immediately.

e. Snake Bites. If a dog is bitten by a poisonous snake, open up the wound with any available instrument that is sharp and clean. Squeeze the wound to cause a fair amount of blood to flow. This will wash the poison from the wound as much as possible. The dog should be taken to the veterinarian immediately so antitoxins can be administered. If the bite has been sustained on the leg, it is advisable to apply a tourniquet if at all possible, to keep the poison from flowing further. If the dog is bitten on the face or neck, immediately remove the choke chain as swelling occurs rapidly and may interfere with breathing. If medical help is not immediately available, an ice pack may be placed above the bite area until help arrives. Check frequently to make sure the ice pack does not freeze tissues.

f. Poisoning. Follow the procedures listed in paragraph 5.

g. Overheating. Overheating represents a very serious medical emergency in which immediate action by the handler may be necessary to save the dog's life. In the summertime/hot climates, overheating occurs when the dog is unable to eliminate its body heat rapidly enough. One sign of overheating is a very high body temperature (105 degrees Fahrenheit or more). Other signs may include poor response to commands, weakness, unsteady gait, vomiting, difficult or labored breathing, convulsions, and

collapse. First-aid treatment consists of carrying the dog as quickly as possible to the nearest shade. If the dog must be moved more than a short distance to the shade or to the treatment facility, transport it in a vehicle. Walking or running it only serves to increase the overheating problem and must not be done. Body temperature can be lowered by running/sponging cold water over the head, body, and legs. If a stream or body of water is available, immerse the dog. Be sure the dog's head is above water at all times so that water cannot get into the lungs. If ice is available, massage it over the body and legs. Ice packs may be placed on the inside of the forelegs near the body or on the inside of the dog's thighs. Large veins are close to the surface in these areas and body temperature can be lowered rapidly. Cool the body temperature to 103 degrees Fahrenheit. To prevent overheating, keep vigorous exercise to a minimum in hot weather and allow frequent rest periods. Also, adequate ventilation is necessary when a dog is being transported.

h. Bloat. Bloat is an acute enlargement of the dog's stomach. The distended stomach may contain a mixture of gas, food, and water. Bloating may occur within a few hours after eating, and following the consumption of large quantities of water. This most often happens after hard exercise when the dog is returned to the kennel and allowed to consume unlimited amounts of water. Shortly after drinking the water, a noticeable enlargement of the abdomen occurs just behind the ribs and primarily on the left side. The dog will act restless and may show signs of pain in the abdominal region. The dog will attempt to vomit or have a bowel movement, which may or may not be successful. Breathing will be difficult or labored due to pressure of the enlarged stomach on the chest. Handlers encountering a bloated dog should immediately alert the veterinarian, stop all water and food consumption, and give the dog moderate exercise such as slow walking. After walking, a bloated dog will be able to relieve itself by having frequent bowel movements or by passing large amounts of gas. Serious cases of bloat may require extensive medical/surgical treatment. Several measures are used for the prevention of bloating. After training or working, dogs should not be fed for at least 2 hours.

This gives them time to relax and satisfy their thirst before food enters the stomach. Dogs should be given small amounts of water during training or when working in hot weather to prevent excessive thirst from developing. When dogs are kenneled after working/training, there should be only 3 inches of water in the bucket during the next hour. At the end of this cooling off period, the bucket can be one-quarter to one-third filled with water. By this time the dog should have cooled off enough that it will not feel the need to drink excessive amounts of water.

I. Burns and Scalds. Burns and scalds may be caused by hot liquids, chemicals, fire, and friction. A first-degree burn is indicated by reddened skin, a second-degree burn by blistering, and a third-degree burn by damage to deeper tissue and a cooked appearance. If an MWD sustains a serious burn, call the veterinarian immediately as shock quickly follows such a burn. The dog should be kept warm and quiet, wrapped in a blanket. Clean the burn gently, removing any foreign matter such as bits of grass, hair or dirt. Act as quickly as possible. Prevent exposure to air by applying a clean cloth/piece of gauze, soaked in a solution of Epsom salts or bicarbonate of soda to a pint of clean, warm water. The dog should be muzzled to prevent it from interfering with the dressing. If the burn or scald is a minor one, clip hair away from the affected area and apply a paste of bicarbonate of soda and water. Apply it thickly to the burned area and try to keep the dog from licking it off.